

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 and 13-18 are presented for consideration, with Claims 1 and 13 being independent.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and amended to correct minor informalities and improve their idiomatic English form. In the claims, independent Claims 1 and 13 have been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. In addition, editorial changes have been made to selected claims, and Claims 15-18 have been added to provide an additional scope of protection. Claims 11 and 12 have been cancelled.

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Kitagawa '142. Claims 7-10 are rejected as allegedly being obvious over Kitagawa in view of Cummings '504. Finally, Claims 13 and 14 stand rejected as allegedly being obvious over Conwell '765 and Kitagawa. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' invention as set forth in Claim 1 relates to a laminating apparatus for laminating a film on a record medium, and includes fixing means for fixing a film onto a front side of the record medium, feed means for feeding the record medium to the fixing means, and film introducing means for directing the film to the fixing means. In addition, conveying means conveys toward a discharge port the record medium and the film which are fixed together, a cutter is disposed between the conveying means and the discharge port and adapted to cut the film, and a control unit is provided to control the laminating apparatus. As amended, the control unit includes a repeat mode in which the apparatus shifts to a waiting condition where the film introducing means and the conveying means are stopped so that a preceding record medium is stopped at a position where it leaves the fixing means, with the position located upstream of the discharge port, while the feed means is driven to feed a succeeding record medium toward the

fixing means, and then the film introducing means, the conveying means and the fixing means are driven again before a leading end of the succeeding record medium reaches the fixing means, while the succeeding record medium and the introduced film are fixed together as discharging the preceding record medium from the discharge port.

Claim 13 relates to an image forming apparatus that includes a recording apparatus, as well as a laminating apparatus having the features of Claim 1.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, the control unit can operate the laminating apparatus in a waiting condition that allows recording mediums to be fed at different times. In this manner, unnecessary feeding of the recording medium can be avoided.

The primary citation to Kitagawa relates to an apparatus for applying a laminate film for use in the manufacture of print circuit boards. The Office Action asserts that Kitagawa includes fixing means, feed means, film introducing means, conveying means and a cutter. It is respectfully submitted, however, that Kitagawa does not teach or suggest, inter alia, a control unit capable of operating the film applying apparatus as set forth in Applicants' claimed invention. In Applicants' Claim 1, the control unit provides a repeat mode in which the apparatus shifts to a waiting condition where the film introducing means and the conveying means are stopped so that a preceding record medium stops at a position where it leaves the fixing means, while the feed means is driven to feed a succeeding record medium toward the fixing means. Then, the film introducing means, the conveying means and the fixing means are driven before a leading end of the succeeding record medium reaches the fixing means, while the succeeding record medium and the introduced film are fixed together as the preceding record medium is discharged from the discharge port. Although Figure 2 of Kitagawa illustrates a control device for controlling the film applying apparatus, Kitagawa fails to provide a detailed description of

how the film applying apparatus is controlled, and provides nothing in the way of a repeat mode in which a waiting condition is implemented as set forth in Applicants' Claim 1.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

The secondary citation to Cummings relates to a process of laminating and was cited for its teaching of downstream sensors. Cummings fails, however, to compensate for the deficiencies in Kitagawa as discussed above with respect to independent Claim 1.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the proposed combination of Kitagawa and Cummings, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. §103 is respectfully requested.

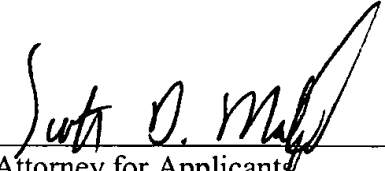
The Conwell patent relates to an image forming apparatus but also fails to teach or suggest a control unit as set forth in Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, the proposed combination of Conwell and Kitagawa, even if proper, still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 13 and 14 is respectfully requested.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claims 1 and 13 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 2-10 and 14-18 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C.
office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our
below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants
Scott D. Malpede
Registration No. 32,533

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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